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New Hotline Helps Kinship Relatives Caring for Children

Caregivers can get answers, support from toll-free phone line

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 11, 2015) – The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) has launched a Kinship Support Hotline to provide continued assistance to kinship relatives.

The hotline provides kinship relatives the chance to address program issues, talk about problems or ask questions. Local office staff will answer hotline calls.

The Kinship Support Hotline is 877-565-5608.

Kinship care -- the care of children by relatives or close family friends -- is coordinated by the CHFS Department for Community Based Services, the state's primary social services agency that has offices in all 120 counties.

DCBS Commissioner Teresa James said the hotline will provide a direct link to services for relative caregivers.

"We developed this hotline to support the many families who have opened their hearts and their homes to relative children," she said. "Our goal is to help relative caregivers get the services they need to keep these children with their families and prevent moves to out of home care. We are committed to helping these families on their journey. "

When children cannot stay in their home because of abuse, neglect or dependency issues, kinship care can be an alternative to out of home care and can often help ease the trauma of separating from birth parents by providing a safe, nurturing environment with familiar caregivers.

Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, said that the hotline shows DCBS' strengthening support of families.

"DCBS' new Kinship Support Hotline gives grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives an important resource that will ultimately benefit the relative children they care for," he said. "Kinship care is vital as we ensure that every Kentucky kid has a family, and this new tool provides support for relatives who are parenting again."

The hotline is managed by DCBS central office staff in Frankfort, with liaisons in each of the state's nine DCBS regions. Relatives who have a DCBS protection and permanency worker actively involved with the child placed in their home will continue to receive assistance through the active worker.

The hotline is staffed 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Caregiving relatives can also email DCBSChildProtection@ky.gov for information, resources or support for their families.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.